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Three in ten older job seekers say age is a barrier

Almost three in ten (29% or 32,400) unemployed people aged 45 years and over reported being "considered too old by employers" as their main obstacle to finding work, according to figures released by the Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS).

This was down from 2005 when 34% of unemployed people aged 45 years and over reported this as their main difficulty in securing a job.

Being "considered too old by employers" was also the most common difficulty reported by the long-term unemployed (those who had been continuously unemployed for 12 months or more). The long-term unemployed made up approximately one-fifth (21%) of all unemployed people in July 2006.

For younger unemployed people, a lack of experience was perceived as the main hurdle to finding a job. More than one in five (21%) job seekers aged 20-24 years reported "insufficient work experience" as their main difficulty in finding work. This was also the most common main difficulty cited by job seekers aged 15-19 years.

The number of unemployed people decreased by 5% from 484,800 people in July 2005 to 462,000 in July 2006. Younger job seekers (15-24 years) made up 38% of unemployed people, a further 38% were aged 25-44 years, with the remaining 24% aged 45 years and over. The median duration of unemployment rose from 12 weeks in July 2005 to 15 weeks in July 2006.

More than half (56%) of job starters (people who had started their current job in the 12 months to July 2006) had been looking for work for less than one year, while a further 5% had been looking for work for more than 12 months. The remaining 39% did not look for work prior to being offered their current job.

More than half (53%) of job starters reported that they wrote, phoned or applied in person to an employer for work. Of job starters, 29% had answered an advertisement for a job in a newspaper, 26% had answered an advertisement for a job on the Internet, and 12% had registered with Centrelink as a job seeker.

Further details can be found in **Job Search Experience, Australia, July 2006** (cat. no. 6222.0).

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